

To Senator Buxton

I would like to thank the deafblind state-wide committee for inviting me to submit this funding request. I have been involved with the deafblind for several years.

A service support provider, commonly referred to as a SSP, is a specialized, trained individual. This empowers the deafblind person to make decisions for themselves based on the visual, environmental and social information provided by the SSP. Human guide assistance is another responsibility of the SSP. Additionally, the SSP is responsible to facilitate communication for the deafblind person.

Utah's SSP program has continued to show steady growth in numbers as the budget allows. Each expansion in the budget has been accompanied with expansion in consumers, this growth shows that people are out there in need of services. For example, at the beginning of 2016 the number of consumers receiving services were 36 and after the appropriation of additional funds in 2017 the program expanded, reaching 58 individuals with the waiting list growing every day. Because SSP services facilitate independence and community integration, those who wish to maintain their lifestyle regardless of sensory loss will continue to be drawn to the SSP Program.

You experienced what you witnessed/experienced at the deafblind conference last year. How having an SSP to rely on communication access with 7 speakers, and how deafblind individuals were able to navigate at the conference with their SSP's guidance.

You are all aware of the request, we are asking for **\$250,000** as a guaranteed line item in the budget. This funding will be used for the support service provider program I just described above.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.